

VA**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**

News Release

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Washington, D.C. -- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has selected the Tampa, Fla., VA Medical Center to be this year's recipient of the Robert W. Carey Quality Award -- the department's top award for quality achievement. The award recognizes the hospital's commitment to the veterans it serves and to the community, as well as quality improvement efforts made by the hospital and its satellite clinics.

The Tampa VA Medical Center's rehabilitation programs are the first in VA's system to be accredited by the Commission for Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities. Employee teams at the facility have received a Hammer Award from Vice President Al Gore, and three VA Scissors Awards for cutting costs and increasing efficiency.

A panel of judges, including officials from public and private-sector organizations who are recognized as leaders in customer service and quality, selected four other VA operations as top quality achievers in four separate categories: the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center, for health care; the Portland, Ore., VA Regional Office, for benefits services; the Denver Distribution Center, for support services; and the Fort Logan National Cemetery, Denver, Colo., for cemeteries. The National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, Honolulu, Hawaii, and VA Regional Office and Insurance Center, St. Paul, Minn., received special recognition as achievement winners for their entries. Recipients will be honored in a Washington, D.C., ceremony Sept. 25.

The Robert W. Carey Quality Award, presented annually since 1992, is named for the director of the VA Regional Office and Insurance Center in Philadelphia who died in 1990. Carey led his office in initiating a total-quality management approach to serving veterans and their families. Through the Carey Award and other quality initiatives, VA is continually making improvements in its delivery of services and quality of health care to veterans.